

June 1978

WASHINGTON POST

A 21

made in

file

## Cambodia Claims CIA, Vietnam Fomented Coups

TOKYO (AP)—American and Vietnamese agents helped foment three unsuccessful coups against the Cambodian government since the Khmer Rouge Communists seized power in April 1975, Deputy Premier Ieng Sary said yesterday.

"There was an attempt to topple our government in September 1975, as well as one in 1976 and 1977," Ieng Sary told reporters in Tokyo. "We have managed to put down all such attempts at subversion."

The Cambodian leader, here on an unofficial visit, said the CIA and Vietnamese secret service had encouraged the attempts at overthrow.

[A spokesman for the CIA in Washington denied Ieng Sary's charge, calling it "preposterous."]

Asked about reports from Yugoslav journalists and Swedish diplomats who visited Cambodia earlier this year, Ieng Sary denied their assertions that Phnom Penh, the capital, appeared empty.

"About 200,000 people" live there, he said. He went on to say that the initial evacuations soon after the Communists took over in April 1975, was only a "temporary" step. "However, the people are now satisfied with country life and they do not want to return to the city," he said.

At the end of the fighting Phnom Penh held almost 2 million people.

Refugees have said thousands of persons died in the forced evacuation. Ieng Sary said such reports were "fabrications intended to defame democratic Cambodia."

After the war ended, he said, "85 percent of our people became sick with malaria and could not walk. That was the reason for the evacuation of Phnom Penh. It was a necessary measure in order to prevent people from dying." He said most of the malaria cases had been cured.

Ieng Sary said the worst postwar problem has been hunger.

"Many people have died of starvation," he said. "In the course of the

war, much damage occurred to our country. Many cattle and water buffalo were destroyed, and therefore, we had a lack of food."

He added: "I would like to emphasize that we have not relied on foreign aid for food, and now we have overcome all of our food problems and we have even enough to export."

Ieng Sary reiterated Cambodia's position that it is willing to negotiate its border dispute with Vietnam "with the precondition that Vietnam must promise to respect out territorial integrity."

"They must promise not to attempt to interfere in our internal affairs, to attempt coups and must promise not to wage aggression," he said.